

NEWARK FREE LIBRARY

**750 Library Avenue
Newark, Delaware 19711
(302) 731-7550**

The earliest record of a library in Newark is contained in a book of minutes dating from December 14, 1858 to March 18, 1862. This subscription library was called the Newark Library and Literary Association. In 1878, the library was located in a store owned by Mr. Wilbur T. Wilson. And in 1897, a committee was appointed by the Newark New Century Club to investigate the library. As a result, Mr. Wilson offered the Club a second story room in his building and turned over the existing collection, renaming this the Newark Town Library.

In 1917, when the Newark New Century Club House was completed, the library moved there until 1920, when it moved again to a room in the Academy Building. In 1934, New Century Club Library Committee Chairman Mrs. Jean Sinclair proposed a City referendum to gain tax support for the library. The first referendum failed and the library was closed for one year. The second referendum passed in May 1935, ensuring that the library would be tax-supported.

With the growth of Newark's population, more library room was needed. In the fall of 1957, the library purchased and moved into the renovated St. Thomas Episcopal Church building. Later, the home located next door was acquired by the Library Commission and, after extensive repairs, was opened as a separate children's library in 1964.

The library collection and library usage continued to grow and a professional librarian was hired in 1966. Just two years later, the Library Commission began planning for a new library building at the intersection of East Main Street and Delaware Avenue, where the library continues to operate today.

The Newark Free Library offers many and varied services to the town of Newark including providing an introduction to the pleasures of reading to young children and helping parents ensure their children are school-ready. The library also makes available materials to support elementary and high school students in their studies and provides materials for leisure reading, listening, and viewing to all members of the community.

Key Individuals

Mr. George Maclem was the first librarian of the Newark Library and Literary Association in 1858. *Mrs. Jean Sinclair* proposed a City referendum to gain tax support for the library in 1934.